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SOBER and CHARITABLE
DISQUISITION,
CONCERNING THE
IMPORTANCE of the DOCTRINE
OF THE
TRINITY,
PARTICULARLY
With regard to WORSHIP,
AND THE
DOCTRINE of SATISFACTION.

ENDEAVOURING TO SHEW,

That those in the different SCHEMES should bear with each
other in their different SENTIMENTS,

AND NOT

Separate COMMUNIONS, nor cast one another out of
Christian FELLOWSHIP on this Account.

In a LETTER to the Reverend * * * * *.

By the late Rev. and learned Mr. SIMON BROWNE.

So then every one of us shall give an Account of himself to God: Wherefore
let us no more judge one another. Rom. xiv. 12, 13.

THE SECOND EDITION.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR W. HARRIS, No. 70. ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

ASSOCIATION
OF
CHRISTIAN
MISSIONARIES

FOR
THE
PROPAGATION
OF
THE
GOSPEL
AMONG
THE
HEATHEN

IN
ALL
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OF
THE
WORLD



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A

SOBER and CHARITABLE
DISQUISITION, &c.

REVEREND SIR,

YOU complain, in a piece published to vindicate your conduct in the debates about the Trinity, that none of those, who have blamed you, and thought you too warm, have ever, though desired, given you their reasons, or offered any thing for your conviction, and the change of your conduct.

I, therefore, who have thought there was room for mutual esteem, love, and Christian fellowship, among those who think differently on these points, and was ever for lessening differences among Christians, and reconciling them to one another, have made bold to present you here with the reasons of these sentiments: If they carry conviction with them, you will, of course, think of changing your conduct; if they do not, you will see, 'tis not without appearance of reason, that I have, among others, thought it wrong.

You think, right apprehensions in these points, of the last importance; those in the contrary scheme to yours, destroying the morality, or, as I would rather

term it, the natural obligation of the first commandment, the fundamental duty of all religion; and the doctrine of satisfaction for sin; which is as fundamental a principle in Christianity.

IF this be fact, their mistakes, in themselves, are doubtless very important: But may not you be possibly, your self, mistaken? Or, if not, is there no room for charitable thoughts, concerning, and treatment of, these mistaken men?

I. As to the first of your charges, it is founded on their giving religious worship to one whom they think not God: Whereas all such worship, to any being besides God, is expressly prohibited by the first commandment, which says, *Thou shalt have no other God before, or besides me.*

THAT this is the plain meaning of this law to the Jews; and that all religious worship was forbidden by it, under that dispensation, to any but God, those who differ from you readily allow; and that God had his reasons for such an unlimited prohibition then.

AND I will moreover allow, that there are general reasons why all men, at all times, should look on themselves under such a prohibition, till God is pleased to signify his will, that some other Being should be worshipped.

IT is little we know of the invisible world, or its inhabitants; their nature, powers, state, place of abode, &c. whether they are Natives, or Spirits departed from bodies. We know not whether they have power in themselves, or commission from God to succour us, or confer any benefits or favours on us. We must therefore apply, and pay honour to them at great uncertainties, having neither natural light nor revelation supernatural, to direct us herein. And whilst we may have free access to God, and must know so little of them,

them, it is absurd in it self, and dishonourable to him, to make any such addressees to them at a venture.

BUT this notwithstanding, those who differ from you say, they can see no reason in nature, that is, no unalterable reason for this prohibition; But that God may allow, and require, if he think fit, worship to be paid to a Being inferior to himself; which being the case, the morality, that is, the natural obligation of the first command, is not destroy'd by such an allowance; though, as it stands in the Jewish law, it is *in tantum* repealed.

I. I own I must herein concur with them. For,

WORSHIP, in general, is nothing else but inward respect to a superior being, in proportion to its known excellencies, rank, state, power, &c. expressed by proper external signs. A civil worship to earthly Superiors, you do not, cannot disallow. You may pay them inward esteem, love, reverence, trust, &c. you may request benefits and favours from them, offer thanks to them, may praise and extol them for their real excellencies and good deeds. You may put confidence in their power, goodness, truth, promises. You may bow the knee, uncover the head, prostrate your self; nay, burn incense^a to them. This is no breach of God's law, nor intrenchment on his honour.

WHAT then is such? Is it all like respect paid by like signs to Beings invisible? These acts addressed to God, are acts of divine worship: Must they be so, if addressed to any other invisible Being? What in nature constitutes them such?

SUPPOSE GOD should think fit to set an invisible Being over a nation, with power to confer those benefits on the inhabitants, which their earthly princes

^a Dan. ii. 46.

cannot, and direct them, where and how to apply to him for this purpose; Will that inward respect, &c. or those outward signs, which are allowable to an earthly Superior, and no breach of this command, become thus criminal, if address'd to this invisible Superior? seeing I ought to reverence him for his known excellencies, dignity, authority, seeing he is impow'ed of God to help me, seeing I am directed of God, where and how to apply to him; why should my bowing the knee to him, prostrating myself before him, requesting his help, paying thanks for it, &c. entrench on God's honour, or render him divine, rather than my address'ing these acts to an earthly superior? I own, I can see no reason; especially when, it this be done out of obedience to a divine command, I honour and worship God directly therein, as I do by paying respect to an earthly prince, from the same principle.

To say this is civil, not religious worship, is to allow the thing, so the name be changed. It is manifestly no divine worship.

To say, God, in the worship paid him, must be set at an infinite distance from every other Being; for that he is infinitely superior: What will thence follow? That all those acts, which, when offer'd to God, are acts of divine worship, must be withholden from every other Being? Then all civil worship, to an earthly prince, must be prohibited by this command. But if this be not the necessary consequence, what is there, in the reason of things, to render that homage, which, when offer'd to an earthly prince, is dutiful and praise worthy, thus criminal, when offer'd to an invisible Superior? Does he approach so much nearer to God by being invisible, that he cannot be set at an infinite distance from him? or do these acts approach nearer
to

to infinite, because he is invisible. The very reason here assigned, for setting God at an infinite distance from every other Being, in the worship paid him, shews the inconsequence of this.

For if God be, and must be, infinitely superior to every other being, the worship offered to any inferior Being, must set that Being at an infinite distance from him; seeing, if he be inferior at all, he must be infinitely inferior; the first being therefore supposed, the last must be implied; for it must be in the notion of the Being addressed, that this distance is to be kept. In the acts themselves, it cannot be observ'd, whether internal or external; or, in other words, our internal reverence, &c. for God, cannot be infinite reverence, &c. whilst our reverence for another being is infinitely inferior to the other. Much less, in bowing the knee, &c. can this distance be observed.

If you say, all such worship to an invisible Being, must imply its having divine perfections, and therefore must be divine worship: Why must it? Can any other reason be assigned for this, but that none but God is to be worshiped? And what is this but proving the point, by taking it for granted?

BUT that there is no such necessary implication, is plain; for the worship of such inferior Being, is worship to one who is supposed to have all his being, power and authority from God; and therefore not to have divine perfections. And to tender worship to God, under this notion, were manifestly to dishonour and degrade him. In short, the supposing him not to be God, but an inferior Being, is to suppose him not to have divine perfections; and the worshiping God, under such a notion, would directly deny him to have divine perfections, instead of implying it; and
instead

instead of honouring him as God, would degrade him into somewhat that is not God^b.

It does not seem to me, therefore, that there is any reason, in the nature of things, why all worship must be unchangeably and perpetually confined to God himself; or, why God may, at no time, and on no consideration, allow, or require worship to an invisible Being, who is not God; and if so, the natural obligation of the first command, is not destroyed by such worship. It is, and ever will be obliging, as far as there is perpetual reason for its obligation; though what was peculiar in it, or enjoined, *pro tempore*, may be changed; as is the case as to the fourth commandment, in the general account of Christians.

SHOULD you tell me, I must herein be under a mistake, because the scriptures, even of the New Testament, charge Polytheism on the Heathens, for worshiping the creature, besides the Creator^c; and serving those, who, by nature, are not Gods^d; though many of these were worshiped only as mediatorial Gods; all acknowledging one supreme God, whom the Romans term *Deus Optimus Maximus*, and their very poets, *Hominum Pater atque Deorum*: This fact is hardly to be made out; nor will the texts bear the stress laid on them.

As to the fact, that the Heathen philosophers and

^b And should this be necessarily implied, then the worshiping Christ, with religious worship, is, in fact, giving him divine worship, which is practically to acknowledge his divinity. And such practical acknowledgment, should, methinks, more recommend them to our esteem and love, than a mistaken apprehension concerning him, should influence us to the contrary. As God is certainly more honoured by dutiful behaviour towards him than right apprehension concerning him; and will sooner accept one who carries it dutifully, with wrong apprehensions, than one, who with juster thoughts, carries it undutifully.

Rom. i. 25.

^d Gal. iv. 8.

Literati

Literati did, many of them, talk of one supreme God, and of the others as a sort of mediatorial Deities, is not denied. But whether the people made this distinction, and did not worship all as equally God, is another question. The scriptures speak of them as such gross Idolaters, nay, as rendering divine worship to stocks and stones^e; to Beings that have no eyes to see, nor ears to hear, nor tongues to speak^f, dumb Idols. Consult the story of Elijah's destroying the prophets of Baal. Is there any footstep or print of a mediatorial God? Does not Elijah say, If Jehovah be God, then follow him; if Baal, then follow him^g. And upon the decision of the contest, the people cry out, Jehovah, he is the God^h. There is not the least hint, that the contest was between the supreme and a mediatorial God, but between two, making equal pretensions to Godhead.

THE texts referred to, speak not home to your point. That to the Romans is, indeed, a charge of idolatry or Polytheism on the Heathens. But it is not certain, that the Apostle here means worshipping the creature besides the Creator, that is, as well as he. Our translators have rendered it *more than* the Creator; and the preposition *παρα*, will certainly bear this sense; and the context seems to require it: Where the Apostle does not seem to be stating the notion of Idolatry, but aggravating theirs, as well as their other crimes. To this purpose it seems more proper to charge them with worshipping the creature above the Creator (of which they were certainly guilty) than besides him, the first being more criminal. However, yours is not the necessary sense; and therefore no necessary conclusion, to your purpose, can be drawn from it.

^e Isa. xxxvii. 19. ^f Psal. cxxxv. 16, 17. ^g 1 Kings xviii. 21.

^h Ver. 33.

THAT to the Galatians seems, to me, quite besides your purpose. The Apostle is not here charging the guilt of Idolatry on the Galatians, nor aggravating it; but warning them against Jewish teachers, who would have persuaded them to be circumcised, and thereby would have enslaved them to the elements of the world, to which, by this rite, themselves were made subject.

To this purpose, at the beginning of this chapter, he shews, that God's family, under the Jewish dispensation, was in a state of nonage, during which, the heir differs little from a servant; but, under the gospel, the members of it are grown up to a state of manhood; and hints how preposterous it would be for Christians to relapse into such a state: And to enforce this consideration, is the passage referred to introduced; *Then, indeed, when ye knew not God*, ἐδουλεύσατε (not ye did service, but ye were enslaved) τοῖς μὴ φύσει ὕσθεοις. *But now how turn you again to those weak and beggarly elements, to which you would again be in bondage* (δουλεύειν θέλετε.) *You observe days, &c.*

Is it not manifest, that δουλεύω, in both places, is to be rendered alike? Doth not this best suit the Apostle's design? Do not the weak and beggarly elements here answer to the elements of the world, mentioned before? Are not these explain'd by observing days, &c. And is not a bondage of which he puts them in mind, to caution them against a return to the like bondage? That of the Jews they had not experienced; one like it they had in their former Heathenism: This he sets before them, to prevent their relapsing into such a state; and this directly to his purpose. But why should he mention their former Idolatry? Were the Jewish teachers persuading them to turn Idolaters? No, but to be circumcised, and thereby come under the bondage of their law. To
charge

charge their former Idolatry upon them, was nothing to his argument, and much less the stating the notion, or assigning the ratio formalis of it.

It is not their worshiping τοῖς μὴ φύσει ἔσσι θεοῖς, whatever this means, but being enslaved to them by observing days, &c. of which he speaks. Whether the phrase be rendered, those who, by nature, are not Gods, or those Gods which, in nature, are not, (many of which were worshiped by Heathens) if proper worship be not meant by the verb ἐδουλεύσατε, no argument can thence be drawn, that to worship even the Gods who have no natural existence, is Idolatry, or a breach of the first command. It is enough for the Apostle's purpose, that what is said concerning them is true, which is the case, whether φύσει be rendered in nature, or by nature. Nor can the Apostle, in such an incidental passage, be supposed, quite besides his purpose, to state the formal notion of Idolatry, or rather Polytheism. It is not their crime, but their encumbrance; not their Idolatry, but Bondage, whilst they were Idolaters, that he sets in view; and that, not to blame them for what was past, but caution them for the future; and that not against a fault neither, but a grievance.

It signifies little what φύσει εἶναι signifies, if δουλεύειν here signifies not to worship, but be enslaved. And though it every where else signify to be by nature, in the New Testament, this does not argue it must be so render'd here. And if by nature Gods must signify essentially Gods, I should think the Apostle would hardly have used this phraseology, but rather have said, Ye served many Gods, when by nature there is but one God. Especially in stating the notion of Polytheism, he would have guarded against the most remote hint, that there were Gods, or more than one by nature; nor left the Heathens, room to say, that the

the worship of many Gods was no crime, if they were by nature Gods, which they supposed many of theirs to be.

UPON the whole, since, there is no reason in nature, why worship should, at no time, be given to men, or required of God, to an inferior invisible Being, how does it appear, that worshiping Jesus Christ, supposing him such a Being, with inferior worship, destroys the morality, that is, the natural obligation of the first command? God has plainly commanded his worship; as God they think they cannot worship him, without plain breach of the first command, which naturally and unchangeably binds to worship no more than one God, that is, no more than one who is God; two who are God, being, in their account, two Gods. Though, therefore, I can easily prove them guilty of not intentionally glorifying Christ as God, I cannot charge them with formal Polytheism, in giving inferior worship to Christ; especially if the worship to be rendered him by the Christian scheme, is worship inferior to what is divine, as they think it is. But,

2. ARE you sure your selves are guiltless, as to this particular? You should, I think, be very sure, before you make their guilt the ground of renouncing all Christian fellowship with them. Doubtless, say you: We can see no danger on our side. The breach of this command is what renders their scheme so frightful to us. I know it: But may you not, unawares, slip in a matter on which you are yet upon the guard? I will lay before you the reasons why I think you are not so wholly out of danger as you apprehend.

Is not God as much dishonoured by offering him worship not divine, but inferior, as by giving worship inferior to an inferior Being? Nay more? seeing such worship must be degrading to him; but the offering
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such worship to an inferior Being, cannot deify it, but upon supposition that all worship to an invisible Being, must, in the nature of things, be divine, which to me appears not.

YET do not you offer such worship to Jesus Christ? Must you not do it, even on your own principles? Do you not, are you not bound to worship him as Mediator? Some, indeed, to avoid this argument, deny all worship to him as Mediator; but with what eyes they read the scriptures, I could never see. For,

Is not saving faith, the primary duty of Christianity, a faith in him as Mediator? Is this no act of religious worship? Is he not herein to be owned, revered, addressed to, confided in, and thereupon beloved and obeyed as such? Is not this the faith, into which Christians are baptized? Is he not as such to be remember'd in his supper? Can his death be shewn forth but as such? The death of God, as God, cannot be shewn forth; for as God he could not die; nor did he die under that character, but as Mediator. Is it not as Mediator we go to God by him, in every common act of Christian worship; And do we not directly invoke, apply to him, and rely on him therein as such? In short, the worship to Christ, enjoined by the Christian religion, is worship to him under this character. To deny this, is to destroy the very foundations of our religion as Christian.

BUT is not this, must it not be on your own scheme and principles, a worship inferior to what is divine? Give me leave to set in view the reason why it has such an appearance to me. Those you oppose alledge, in support of their scheme, that Christ appears throughout the gospel, as commissioned of God, sent, sealed, anointed of God to this office, and that in part antecedently to his assuming humanity, a body having been prepared of God for him, that he might come
and

and do his will. This they think must prove him an inferior Being.

How do you rid your selves of this difficulty? Not by denying the fact; this cannot be denied; but by a distinction between the Theology of the Trinity and the Oeconomy. All three persons are equally God, but by voluntary dispensation, the first bears the state, character, and majesty of God, the second of the mediator between God and men, the third of Paraclete. In these characters the Son receives his commission to be Mediator from the Father; not as first in the Trinity, but God, in the Oeconomy. The Paraclete has his from both Father and Son; not as such in the Trinity, but as God and Mediator in the Oeconomy. So that though the Father, as to the Theology, be not singly and solely God, yet this is his peculiar character in the Oeconomy. It is with him as such, the Son mediates for sinners, to him offers himself in sacrifice, and from him has his commission for this purpose. This is the common doctrine on this head, I think.

BUT if Christ be to be worshiped as Mediator, and to be Mediator must have a commission from God, *viz.* Him who bears this character in the dispensation, can this worship be divine, when the person to whom it is tendered, must in the very tender, be considered as the commissioner of God?

SHOULD you say, the worship must be divine, because though he be God's commissioner, he also is God: the consequence is far from being necessary. For if the worship is to be given him as Mediator, and for discharging this office he must have a commission from God, he must be worshiped not as God, but as God's Officer. He is not mediator as God, (however necessary it be, that, for the discharge of this office, he should be God) but as constituted of
God

God such an Officer, and having his commission for it.

SUPPOSE two earthly Princes governing the same kingdom with equal power, and to bring about a reconciliation with rebellious subjects, one, by mutual consent, assumes for a time, the stile and title of King, and the other, by a commission from him as such, becomes Mediator betwixt him and the rebels, to introduce them into his presence, and upon their submission recommend them to mercy, and they are required as such to apply to him: Do they apply to him as their sovereign, or as a Mediator appointed by him, and commissioned to bear this office? is the homage he receives from them kingly homage? is it not manifestly homage to an Officer constituted by the King's commission, and therefore inferior to what is kingly? The case seems to me parallel, except that in the present Case, this must more strongly exclude: Because God being essentially one, he who gives a commission as God, must act as a superior, and cannot give a commission to another his equal, without admitting two Gods.

THE homage therefore paid the Mediator in the Christian state, is not, cannot be, properly divine, but must be inferior. Not the worship of God the Sovereign, but of one who (though he be God) is not acting under that character, but in an office to the bearing whereof the commission of him who doth is necessary. ⁱ For no person taketh this honour to himself; but he who is called of God. *Συν ἑαυτῷ τις λαμβάνει.* And if it be not necessary, why should it be given? but if it be necessary, his must be an office inferior to that of God, and if under this character he is to be worshiped, it must be with inferior, and not properly divine worship.

ⁱ Heb. v. 4.

It must also be farther observed, that the Mediator is not merely the second of three divine persons, but the Logos made flesh. His manhood is as necessary to the office, as his divinity, in your own scheme. And as man he had a commission, call, unction of the holy Spirit for the discharge of his office. The Man Christ Jesus is, expressly said to be, the Mediator between God and Men^k.

If then he is to be worshiped as Mediator, nor could be Mediator without being Man, must not the man be worshiped, when the Mediator is? must not every thing necessary and essential to this character be worshiped, when he is worshiped under it?

SHOULD you say, he is God as well as Man, and to him as such, therefore, the worship is directed: Yet since he is and must be Man as well as God, must not the worship, for the same reason, be directed also to the Man? the worship not being given him as God, but as Mediator. All in him that bears this office, must be worshiped when he is. And his human nature being as necessary to his office, and being commissioned to it as well as his divine, that also must be worshiped. If as Mediator he is to be worshiped, all that he is, and it was necessary he should be, for bearing this office, in which and for which this homage is paid, must share in it.

HENCE the consequence seems necessary, either, that as Mediator he must be worshiped with worship inferior to what is divine: or else, divine worship may be given to a man, at least to Humanity, to a Creature, and an inferior Creature too: Or else the worshipers of Jesus Christ, God-Man, must be breakers of the first command. The last I believe you will not admit. Should you allow the second, with what justice can you charge those in the opposite scheme,

^k 1 Tim. ii. 5.

with so much severity, for worshiping an inferior Being, with inferior worship, whilst you offer to an inferior Creature, worship properly divine? But if you admit the first, you do yourselves that very thing, which yet you condemn in them as such heinous guilt.

A distinction, I know, is here used, between the Foundations on which the worship of Christ rests, and the Motives to the paying it. He is only to be worshiped as God, though his being Mediator may move to the offering it. Religious worship can be founded on nothing but the divine Perfections of him to whom it is tendered, tho' there may be other motives for rendering it. So that Christ may be worshiped, for that he is Mediator, that is, his being Mediator may be a motive to worship him as God; but he must not be worshiped as Mediator, or under that formal consideration. But without enquiring, whether this be not a distinction without a difference, at present, or whether the foundations for worship are not equally motives, and the motives equally foundations, there is no room for the distinction here. For,

THE saving faith of the gospel is not a believing in Jesus Christ as God, for that I have this new motive to believe in him, that he is become Mediator betwixt God and men; but a belief and trust in him, under that formal consideration, as he is Mediator; for if he be God, were he not also Mediator, this homage is not to be offered him. Faith or Trust in the Mediator, are, by no means, proper acts of worship or homage to God, but to the Mediator; and they are due to the Mediator, if he be not God. It may heighten my faith, or trust, to consider that the Mediator is also God; but were he not God, yet I must apply to him, and trust in him as Mediator, if

he be constituted such of God. His being God, may be a motive, that is, a foundation, for my firmer trust, but the formal reason of my trusting in him as Mediator, must be that he is Mediator, and constituted such of God, whether he be God himself, or no.

BUT admitting there is ground for this distinction, and that all men of abstracted thought do direct all their worship to God the Son, as God, considering his meditation only as a motive: are you sure every common Christian has accuracy and abstraction of thought enough for this purpose? Or when to excite gratitude and devotion to their Redeemer, they call to mind the agonies in the garden, the whips, the nails, the spear, the doleful out-cry on the cross, all the sufferings of the humanity; are you sure they have skill to direct their excited thankfulness and devotion to the divine Person, dropping all regard to the agonizing, bleeding, exclaiming, and dying humanity? Should they not, they directly offer their worship to the Manhood: Nay, should any of their worship be directed to the Mediator, and not the whole of it to God the Son, whilst his meditation is only made an incentive to it, they cannot be excused, on this foot, from breaking the first command.

ARE you sure all good Christian people are apprized of this distinction between grounds and motives of worship, or have skill to apply it, so as to keep clear of this sin? If you say you are, you can have strong assurance, I should think, upon very weak evidence. If you are not sure, you have some reason to fear being polluted with the Idolatry of some, who profess the same faith with you, by having fellowship with them, as well as with those who differ from you. Nor do you seem, to me, to act the fair and consistent part, whilst you are so very scrupulous on one side, without jealousies on the other.

BUT

BUT if you are got over all difficulty as to this, are you sure all common Christians, in your assemblies, have skill enough to unite the two natures in Christ, without confounding them, or dividing the Person in their apprehensions? That they are all more accurate in their thoughts on this head, than the great patriarchs Nestorius and Eutyches? Should they not, their worship, in one case, must be directed to a mixed Being, made up of God and man; in the other, to a wrong object; and in both cases, must be formal Idolators, in your sense, or transgressors of the first command. Nay, should they imagine the Mediator's Person only compounded out of his two natures, without confounding them, as the person of a man is compounded of soul and body, without mixture of their substance, this must make him inferior to a divine Person, and the address of worship to him, a breach of the first command. Could you enter the minds of common Christians, I should be apt to think, they have very little apprehension of the human nature's subsistence by a communion in the personality of the Logos; without which, Divines have thought one or other of these errors unavoidable; if such subsistence be not really in nature impossible; of which by and by.

BUT men zealously pursuing their opposers, and aggravating their mistakes by hateful consequences, seldom advert to the wrong sentiments or practices of the good people they animate to hate them; and forget how many of their own side may be involved in the guilt they are forward to fasten on their opposers; tho' it ought to be much more their concern, to preserve their followers from like guilt, than inflame their passions against others for it. But it is time to proceed to the

II. SECOND charge you lay in against those who differ from you, *viz.* That they destroy the great Christian doctrine of satisfaction for sin, by Christ's death. How so? Do they deny his death to have been an expiatory Sacrifice? or that we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sin? I believe every single man among them will disavow this charge. But it is the inevitable consequence of their doctrine. Then make it an argument against their doctrine, and push it as home as you can; but charge it not on the men, and make it a reason of your displeasure against them, or censures of them, that they do what they disown. Once make it clear that their doctrine is chargeable with this consequence, and, I believe, they will renounce it. But how you will do this, I do not see.

I. IF I take you right, you suppose the injured authority of God must be righted, and his justice satisfied, by the full payment of the sinner's debt, either in specie, or by an equivalent. But are you sure this is a doctrine at the foundation of Christianity? I have read the Bible very carelessly, if you can point me to the place where this is so much as intimated.

BUT admit it to be a scripture doctrine, why must your opposers be charged with destroying it? You must have another proposition establish'd, e'er this can be proved, *viz.* That none but God could make this satisfaction. Is this any assertion of scripture? I never yet found it there. Indeed, allow that God has been sacrificed for sin, and the consequence will not be disputed, that this was some way or other necessary. But for what reason it was necessary, you may guess, if you please; but you have no authority to say it was necessary, because none but God could satisfy for sin, till he has said it before you; which I find not that he has any where done.

ADMIT

DISQUISITION, &c.

ADMIT then that sin could not be expiated, but by a full amends to the divine justice, is the consequence necessary, that none but God could make this atonement? Are you sure there is no Being inferior to God, who is so much man's superior, as that his free and voluntary abasement into man, and his shameful death on the cross, may possibly make full amends to divine justice for their sins, who return to God by him? If you are not so thoroughly acquainted with the whole scale of Being, as to have plain and uncontrollable evidence of this, you cannot be sure of your consequence: and whence should you have such information and evidence?

You may think this no way necessary; the guilt of sin is infinite, and no amends can be made to God for such injury, but by one who is infinite, that is, in other words, God. Is this a Scripture assertion? I never met with it there, nor, I believe did you. I have heard a reason given for it; but, I fear, if it has any force, satisfaction for the guilt of but one single sinner will be utterly impossible; at least, without a supposition, which, I am persuaded, you will think utterly, if not infinitely, unreasonable, and much more satisfaction for the guilt of all the redeemed amongst men.

WHAT renders the guilt of sin infinite? The infinite dignity and authority of the sovereign it injures. To this it must hold proportion; and therefore deserve infinite punishment, and stand in need of an infinite satisfaction.

BUT, if it be verily so, the guilt of every single sin must be infinite, because of the infinite dignity and authority of him who is injured and offended by it; this being injured as truly, though not so much by one sin as by many. And for this farther reason, that if it be not, neither can the guilt of the most mul-



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tiplied sins be infinite. No additon of finite quantities or qualities, or multiplication of them, can make up one that is infinite.

BUT if every single sin be infinite, deserving infinite punishment, and needing an infinite satisfaction for it, even the death of God, must not every other need the like? And how then should full amends be made to the justice of God, for all the sins of but one sinner, unless God die as often as the man sins? This, I dare say, you will think utterly, if not infinitely, unfit and unreasonable; though in your way of arguing, it seems absolutely necessary to atone for the sins of but one man.

WILL you say, that yet his dying once is a full compensation to his justice, for the sins of all mankind, all that are saved? Can you say it? It can no more than satisfy for one sin, the guilt of which being infinite, needs infinite satisfaction, that is, the death of God; yet it can make full amends for the numberless sins of millions. Is not this palpable absurdity? Would it not be thought so, by every one, in every other case? Such a Lever, with one man's force, can no more than lift half a tun an inch from the ground, and yet the self-same Lever, with the self-same force, can perform the boast of Archimedes, move the earth from its place, and lift it to the stars: Is not this self-contradiction on view?

I should be loth to lay that at the foundation of Christianity which must undermine it, make that necessary to satisfaction for sin which must leave no possibility of it, or found all the sinners hopes of reconciliation to God, on that which must ruin them all.

To say more is not to be had, therefore this must be satisfactory, is a very wrong inference. Indeed, it will follow, that divine justice must be herewith content,

content, if sinners be hereupon forgiven, but then it must be content with less than full amends, or plenary satisfaction.

AND if GOD must accept of less than full amends to his justice, or the guilt of no one sinner can be atoned for, how will you prove that he cannot accept of the sacrifice, of the best and most excellent of created Beings, but must insist on the sacrifice of one, who is GOD? Or how is the scripture doctrine of atonement for sin, by the sacrifice of Christ, destroy'd by those in a different scheme from yours? Could he not be a sacrifice for sin, unless he were GOD? But,

2. ARE you sure, in your own scheme, of such infinite satisfaction? Manifest it is from the gospel, that the satisfaction, be it finite or infinite, must be by the death of him who makes it. Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission. You say the satisfaction must be infinite; the death of one who is GOD. You must mean one who is truly and really GOD, else you impose on your selves. Could GOD die? Has he a life to lay down, or blood to shed? Any one truly and really GOD? If not, how will you have an infinite satisfaction?

You will say, perhaps, GOD, the divine Nature, or Being, cannot die, but a divine Person, by becoming man, might in that human nature die, and atone for sin by death. Jesus Christ, God-man, might die as man, and by dying, make atonement, as GOD.

LET us consider how this way you will be secured of an infinite satisfaction. In order hereto, the person who satisfies must have infinite dignity; otherwise his death cannot be of infinite value, nor therefore be an infinite satisfaction: And he must be capable of dying, otherwise, whatever dignity he has, he cannot atone for sin by death, for that he cannot die. Jesus Christ therefore must be but one Person, though

God-man; for if the dying person be one, and the person who has infinite dignity be another, the first may die, but cannot satisfy for sin: The other may satisfy for sin, but cannot die.

THAT he may be one person, he must either be a compound person made up of both natures, or one nature being his person (suppose it the divine) the other must some way or other become this person.

IN the first case such compound person can neither be a divine person nor an human, but *quid tertium* compounded of each, made up of both. Such person must be inferior in dignity to a divine person: His person, and consequently his excellency and dignity, being partly divine and partly human, and therefore must be inferior to what is wholly and only divine. And if none but a divine person can satisfy for sin, an inferior person, it is evident, cannot make this satisfaction. Nor is it God that dies, but God-man, not a divine but mixt person. As the soul dies not when the body dies, though we say the Man dies, who is not the soul, but a person compounded of soul and body, and yet no more is meant by it, than that the body is dead, and the union between soul and body *pro tempore* dissolved.

YET, by the way I am mistaken, if this be not the common¹ notion of Christians as to this matter; for I doubt they have not Metaphysicks enough to have any notion of his human nature's having communion in his divine personality. But in this way you cannot have an infinite satisfaction, the person

¹ And those among them who are accustomed to hear the Athanasian Creed, seem to be led by it into this way of thinking; seeing they are told therein, that as soul and body are one Man, so God and Man is one Christ. Unless the change of numbers, of which common Christians know little, be sufficient to guard them from Mistakes, and direct them to think of the Logos assuming the manhood into the communion of his personality.

that makes it, not being a divine Person, nor therefore infinite.

LET us see then how we may have it, in the other way: how shall the Logos, the divine person, satisfy for sin by death? as such he cannot die. But he might die in his assumed humanity. I doubt it, unless his assumed humanity became himself by this assumption. For unless that were *he*, that might die, but he could not. And how could it be *he*, without being that divine Being he is. I mean really, or more than nominally so.

For what is his person really (or as the schools say *a parte rei*) but the divine nature subsisting with his peculiar mode? Or if a principle of Agency be taken into its notion, it is the divine Being or substance with its mode, that really is that particular subsistent and principle of Agency. And to be this person really is to be what the person is, that is, the self-same Being. Nothing can really be this *who*, but must be the *what* this *who* is, at the same time.

THUS John the human Being so named, is John's person really, though we don't call the Being as such, or as his human Being, by the name person, but this human Being as subsisting *in individuo*, and a principle of Agency. Or in other words, our notion of John's person, is that of the particular Being as distinct from every other such Being, and a distinct principle of Agency. But this person is mere notion, being nothing else but our conception of human Being, with this precision or limitation. And that human substance we call John is really the person, and nothing else *a parte rei* can be so.

So that, whatever union be supposed between the Logos and the assumed humanity, this cannot really be his person, without being at the same time what this person is; nor he really be the dying manhood, nor therefore really die, when his human nature died;

That

That might die, but he, that divine person, could not. For seeing he, *a parte rei*, is the divine nature or substance with his peculiar mode of subsistence therein, the human nature can never be really *he*, this person, unless it be also the divine nature so subsisting. And this it cannot be, or if it could must be immortal, and utterly incapable of dying. But remaining human nature, and so capable of dying, in what ever union else it be supposed with him, if it be not really his person, that is, his divine substance, that may die, but he cannot, nor therefore make satisfaction hereby.

AND if the infinite dignity of the sufferer, be needful to make satisfaction for sin, the dying humanity can have no such dignity, nor make such satisfaction. For infinite dignity is inseparable from the infinite person, that is, in truth and reality, from the infinite Being that is the person. Nothing can really have this dignity, but this Being it self. So that unless the humanity be that very divine Being, there could not be infinite dignity in its death; nor therefore amends made by it, in your way, for the sins of men.

IN your way two things are absolutely necessary; viz. That the divine person should be really and truly Man; otherwise he could not really and truly die for sin; and that the human nature should really and truly be that divine person; otherwise his sufferings and death are not of infinite value; that is, the person whose the infinite dignity is, does not really suffer and die, without which you cannot be secured of an infinite satisfaction for sin. But could his divine person be really man, or the human nature in union with him be really God, that is, the divine Being as subsisting in his person? are not both manifest impossibilities? Or may that in strict truth be said, which in strict truth and very deed is impossible?

BUT

BUT if the Logos could not really be man, nor therefore in strict truth said to be so; nor the human nature be himself the very Logos, nor therefore strictly speaking be so termed, the consequence is unavoidable; that this divine person could never make atonement for sin by death, nor the dying humanity make satisfaction for sin by the infinite value of its death. Whatever other union be conceived between the divine Person and the assumed humanity, unless they are so much one, as to be the same; that is, unless his Humanity be really his divine Person, and his divine Person be really his Humanity, he could not really die for sin when his humanity died, nor could the death of this humanity be really of infinite value.

SHOULD it be said, his humanity was assumed into the real communion of his Person; this could not be, without its being assumed into the real communion of what that Person is. And this Person being, in truth, the divine nature so subsisting; this must be communicated as far as the Person is. And the human nature must hereupon as verily be the *what* as the *who*, which the Son of God is; that is, must be as verily God, or the divine Being, as he. For to talk of a communication of the Person, without the Being, is to talk of a communication of the Person, without the Person; for that *a parte rei*, the Person and Being are one and the very same. If therefore the Son's Person be communicated to his humanity, his Godhead must be communicated to it, and that must be as verily God as himself is; which can never be, and if it could, he could no longer be man, nor therefore capable of atoning for sin by death. And for the same thing to be God and man at once, that is really and truly so, is surely as impossible as transubstantiation. Satisfaction for sin in your sense, seems to me therefore, in your own scheme, as impossible as in theirs.

God

God might indeed take man into such close union with, and relation to himself, and give him such property and interest in himself, as thereupon, graciously to repute this man's sufferings his, and accept them as such, and act in such a manner in and by him, that he may be said to do, what the man does. Such an Oeconomy is intelligible. Such union of God with man, such relation of God to man, such habitation and operation of God in man, and such interest of man in God, may be. But that man should, really and strictly speaking, ever be a divine person, or a divine person be man, to me, seems utterly impossible: And therefore proper satisfaction, in your sense, impossible too.

BUT in the case here put, the death of the man is not in strict truth, but in the way of free and gracious acceptance the death of God; not in your sense a real, but only a reputed satisfaction for sin. Yet beyond this I cannot see how the matter can be carried.

AND thus far those you oppose and condemn, may carry the matter as well as you. For they may suppose him whom they term the Logos, to stand in as near relation to God, to be in as close union with him, to have as deep and full an interest in him, to be as much inhabited and actuated by him, as any man, that is, Christ's humanity, in your scheme, can be, and even more; and the sufferings of the Logos, here upon to be as much the sufferings of God, and as much an atonement for sin, as the death of Christ's human nature in your scheme; and so be equally provided of a satisfaction and sacrifice for sin, and not more destroy the doctrine of Christianity on this head, than you.

On the whole, I think you should abate of your zeal against those you oppose, and exercise a little more

more charity towards them; for that they do not seem so deeply culpable, nor so dangerously mistaken as you represent them to yourself, or would pass them on the world; or, at least, yourselves need some excuse as well as they, on the very same heads, on which they are blamed.

III. THERE is indeed diversity of sentiment, and take the thing in one light no little diversity between you. You think God is, and therefore surely may be, three persons or intelligent Agents, as some; three relative subsistences or subsisting relations, as others; three somewhats, as many, and yet one Being or Godhead. They think three proper persons or distinct intelligent agents or acting subjects, must be three distinct Beings, that is, three Gods. You think Jesus Christ to be one of these persons become man. They think he cannot be another divine person from the Father, in the proper sense of the word, without being another God; and therefore suppose him an inferior Being made man.

THREE modes of one and the same Being, or three inward relations of it to its self and among each other, they do not dispute with you. But such relations in Godhead, they think, cannot support the different attributions and characters given in scripture to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. They think these must require three proper agents, or acting subjects, that is three Beings. And these must be either co-ordinate, which, they think, would be three proper Gods; or subordinate, which they conclude must be the case, and is most consonant to all the scripture language concerning them; and therefore, that the Father only is in the strict sense God. You think one Being, with the three distinctions you suppose in it, will support these attributions, and that the language of scripture

scripture, concerning Christ at least, must imply his being verily God, and is no way proper or accountable without it.

ONE side must be mistaken. You are fully persuaded the mistake is theirs: They are equally persuaded it is yours: Both must think each other wrong. And *humanum est errare*. Both are liable to be mistaken. And, when they talk soberly, will own it.

BUT in the heat of contest this is too frequently forgotten. And in points of no little difficulty, because they are points of religion, and momentuous ones, either in truth or in mens apprehensions, they imagine they must have certainty equal if not greater than in mathematical demonstrations. And those that will not own themselves *verbo tenus* infallible, will yet in fact avow it.

I FIND you talking in such a strain. "What must we be certain of nothing, if we are not infallible? No certainly: I do not mean universally, for even the Pope of Rome never pretended to such infallibility. But in the point in which you are certain, you are infallible; and wherein you pretend to be certain, you do equally pretend to infallibility. For certainty is *cui non protest subesse falsum*. You must have evidence for a point, in which you pretend to be certain, not only to put the matter out of doubt, but enough to assure you a mistake is impossible. I am infallibly certain two and two are four, but not merely because I see no reason to doubt it; but because I have full evidence, that I cannot in this be mistaken. I not only see that this may be; I am not only out of doubt it is, but I perceive it must be, and cannot be otherwise. Without such evidence there is no certainty. And where error is impossible there is infallibility.

BUT

DISQUISITION, &c.

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BUT undoubted persuasion, and evidence rendering such persuasion undoubted, may be on both sides of a contradiction. It is so in the philosophical dispute, concerning the divisibility of matter; where, on both sides, there are pretences to demonstration. It is so in the present theological debate. You are out of doubt on your side. You have no reason to think, but that they are so on theirs. But is there certainty on both sides? That is, is there evidence both ways to render mistake on either side impossible? Sure there is not, unless both sides of a contradiction may be certainly true. One or other is certainly the truth, both certainly cannot be; yet both think they have evidence sufficient to leave the matter out of doubt. But it is questionable, whether either side have such evidence, as will justify them in thinking a mistake impossible, without which there is no proper certainty; and if there be not, there is room for mutual charity and forbearance.

NOR does it seem to have been the divine purpose, that all men, in all difficult points of religion, however near they may seem to the foundation, should have the same sentiments. No doubt, God could have delivered his mind so plainly, on every head of religion, that none should have more disagreed about its precise meaning or certain truth, than they do about that of a mathematical definition, axiom or demonstration. And had he purposed there should have been no disagreement, doubtless he had expressed himself with this plainness.

To say he has spoken his mind plainly enough, to all who will credit him on his bare word, and receive what he has delivered with the obedience of faith, is a piece of reverence seemingly meant him, but really a compliment to themselves who can take the liberty to talk in this manner. For the proper meaning is, that
we,

we, and those who understand what God has said, in the sense we do, receive it in the obedience of faith; it is from proud unbelief that any understand it otherwise. Whether this carries in it more of reverence to God and his authority, or value or veneration of our selves, is not difficult to see. Surely modest men, duely apprehensive of the common frailties and imperfections of human nature, would suppose it is lack of evidence, rather than proud obstinacy or unbelief, that keeps other good men from being in their sentiments. Nor can I see, that any thing short of downright infallibility can justify the contrary behaviour, if that can. But to disclaim infallibility in words, and claim it in fact, is too common a practice, though no very commendable one.

IV. I own also, there must be a diversity in practice, issuing from your disagreeing sentiments. You worship God as three persons, at least professedly. They profess to worship one person only as God. Both are agreed, that none, but the one living and true God, is to be worshiped with worship properly divine.

You worship Jesus Christ as God (though hardly in your ^m common Christian worship.) They worship him with inferior worship: For this you charge them with the breach of the first command. They think such inferior worship must be given to Christ, is required by the Gospel, and therefore cannot be a breach of this command. And why I think they may be excused from this guilt, though I say not this is the case, you have the reasons above.

If you are mistaken, you are Polytheists in practice, giving the Glory of the one living God to two besides him, who are not God. If they are mistaken,

^m Vide Page 12, 13, &c.

they with-hold from Christ the Glory due to him as the Mediator appointed of God. This in your sense of things, is also Polytheism, and it is in truth, if the first command, as it was given to the Jews, stands in full force and unrepealed.

AND would I, may you say, have you be yet in Christian fellowship with each other? What have Communion with Idols? Must they not mutually renounce Communion, who thus widely differ in sense and practice?

To me, I own, this seems not necessary. A concern not to break the first command, not only may, but does go a great way in determining both in your different senses and practices. Both are agreed, that by this command none but God is to be honoured with divine worship.

They think, two who are God, two divine persons, must be two GODS, when by this command one only is to be worshiped as God. Worship, indeed, is in scripture required to be given to Christ, but, as they think, manifestly inferior to that of God, and must be so, if they would avoid the worship of more GODS than one.

You think all such inferior worship unalterably prohibited, and not to the Jews only, and *pro tempore*, by the first command, and from this, among other reasons, conclude it is worship properly divine that must be given to Christ; and therefore that he must be God; not indeed another God, but another Person in Godhead.

To avoid giving divine worship to more than one God, they do, in part, give in to the sentiment, that inferior worship may, with God's allowance, and command, be offered to one who is not God.

THE danger of breaking this command, by offering any religious worship to one who is not God, goes

far with you in persuading you Christ is God, and as such to be worshiped. A dread of breaking this command has a considerable share therefore, in settling your sense, and directing your practice on both sides.

SHOULD you, with your principles, practise as they do, you would be formal breakers of this commandment. And the same must be said, should they practise as they do with your principles. But neither are such breakers of it on your own principles. So stands the case.

AND how now are you mutually to behave? Why, to consider, what interpretation a gracious God may be supposed to make of a conduct, issuing on both sides, from much the same good principle, *viz.* A concern for his Glory, and a dread of giving it to an improper Object, which side soever be mistaken.

As also supposing the mistake yours, whilst your conscience bears you witness, that you love God's truth, and would gladly find and embrace it, hate every sin, especially what peculiarly strikes at his honour, and would gladly shun it: What would you humbly hope from a merciful God, should you unwillingly err from his truth, or ignorantly, or through misapprehension commit a sin, which he knows you from your heart abhor? And what measure you would, in such a case, expect from God, you should mete out to them, as they should to you. This, I should think, is but Christian equity.

BUT most men are apt to be very sure themselves are in the right: They cannot be mistaken, others must. Hence they never admit the supposition of a mistake on either side, nor bethink themselves how they must be treated of God on such a supposition. Yet one would think, fallible men, in a point so deep and intricate in it self, and with such appearance of evidence on both sides, should reckon this no impossible supposition.

SURE

SURE an honest mind, inquisitive after truth, and willing to weigh the matter impartially, and examine the evidence on both sides thoroughly, may be long in suspense before he can determine to his full satisfaction; and several men of equal sense, learning, capacity, probity and piety, may, after such examination, make different determinations upon the matter. *Vide Appendix.*

INDEED this is not the common way of finding truth in theological matters: But young men are taught to call one side of the question truth, and defend it against what they are taught to call error, and that commonly with an hateful name or epithet annexed: Or, in other words, to hold the orthodox faith, the faith of the Church, or the party into which they are listed. And such sacred prepossessions are hardly ever dispossessed; especially when a deviation from the tenets of the party is sure to expose them to censure, to clamour, to the loss of reputation, and, it may be, much worse usage. And mens first judgment, under the authority of a Tutor, and the sanction of the Church, before they are capable of judging for themselves, is made the standard of truth and error to them for life. A wrong method, as I apprehend, in all Parties, and very proper to serve the interests of a Sect, but not those of Truth.

BUT since men, in the circumstances mentioned, may make different determinations on this point, this must leave room, on both sides, for the supposition of a possible mistake. Why, I pray you, should I not think another man, to whose capacity I can have no exception, to whose real piety I should have none, did he not differ from me in this point, has, what appears to him, cogent reason for such diversity? Why should I not as readily suppose I may be mistaken, as conclude he must? Once admit this supposition,

and what is the consequence? Why, then I may be as criminal as he now appears; I may be the transgressor of the commandment, the idolater, not he.

YET if my conscience bears me witness, that, if I am one I am no wilful one; that I detest the sin from my heart, nor would be wilfully faulty for the world, why should I not believe the same of him?

AND if I can hope, GOD will never charge a sin on me which he knows I, from mine heart abhor, though from a dread of it, and concern to avoid it, through unavoidable human infirmity I unwittingly and unwillingly fall into it, why should I not hope the same of him?

WHY must I shun and detest him as an Idolater, whom I have so much ground to hope GOD will not charge with this sin? Or, why refuse to own him, and have fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, though, in my account, he has some wrong apprehensions concerning them, and as far as he has must fail in his duty towards one or both?

UNLESS all misapprehension concerning GOD, his Nature, Attributes, &c. however involuntary and unavoidable, must exclude from his favour: This, if you think, I own, I cannot. Divines have generally thought, that a general Repentance for sins unknown, is all that GOD requires; though a particular acknowledgment and desertion of sins known and remembered be necessary. And whether they had thought so or no, this must be the case, or no Penitent can be forgiven; express Repentance for unknown sins being utterly impossible. And sure such unavoidable misapprehensions, if they are sins, are not known to be such, and therefore the Penitent is entitled to forgiveness, though he neither confesses nor forsakes them, as long as he is sincerely willing
to

to do both upon conviction. And to think otherwise, would, in my account, be a very gross imputation on a merciful God.

THIS way of treating such as differ from us, even in points of the most importance, has always seemed to me the most Christian and equitable in it self, and in its tendency more likely to serve than prejudice Truth.

CALM and charitable Debate might be, where men are thus disposed to each other, which can never hurt Truth.

BUT once disavow, renounce, excommunicate men, and declare them enemies, dangerous enemies, and war is proclaimed, and hostilities begun. And thence forward the business is no more to enquire after truth, but to maintain and propagate our own sentiments of each side, and heap all the odium we can on those in a different way of thinking. If there be not more of the passion, prejudice, and the pride of human reason on all sides in this, than commendable zeal for God and his truth, I have been mistaken. You are an older and wiser man, and may possibly think otherwise.

BUT give me leave to observe, this method seems more agreeable to Apostolical practice than what you have followed. You are pleased to take notice, that there were some in the church of Corinth who denied the resurrection. Be pleased to observe farther, that St. Paul lays such a stress on this article, as to make the denial of it subversive of Christianity. "If the dead rise not, then is not Christ risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." He sets himself to confute this mistake with all his might; he solves difficulties, answers objections, rebukes these mistaken men for their ignorance: "Some of you have not the knowledge

“of God; I speak this to your shame.” But do you meet with any direction here to shun them, or put them away from among them, as in the case of the incestuous Person? Are they required to separate from them, put the test to them, or renounce all Christian fellowship with them? No, not though the Apostle hints some licentious Principles were tacked to their mistakes: “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.” And he thinks fit to caution them, that such evil Communications corrupt good Manners.

I have hitherto supposed the matter at the worst, the difference as wide as it can be, and yet cannot see that there is need to cast those who differ from you out of fellowship; and much less when it is considered, that, in the common worship offer'd in Christian assemblies, both sides may join and unite. This is described by the Apostle, as an *access to the Father, by one Spirit, through Christ*. It is to the Father, as God in the oeconomy, through Jesus Christ the Mediator, by the help, and under the influence of the sanctifying Spirit, you offer your ordinary worship. What else means your praying for divine blessings to God, in the name of Jesus Christ his Son, and for his sake? And may not they join in this worship, whilst they address it so professedly to the same God, by the same Mediator, under the influence of the same Spirit, though they may not have just the same conceptions of them? Are you sure that all, who join in worship with you, have just the same formal conceptions of God's nature and attributes? Of the divine Persons, of the Incarnation, Mediator's Person, as you have? Or must you remove all from your communion, as soon as you discover a diversity? And have you a right to put the test to them, to make this discovery? I fear, should you proceed in this method, you would split the church, already too
much

much divided, into many more parcels, and have little thanks from the blessed Head, who so much recommends love, union, mutual forbearance, &c. to all his Disciples. Such conduct favours little of that Charity, that is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, behaveth not itself unseemly, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, but feareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

THESE, Sir, are the reasons, for which I have thought you have over done it in your zeal, and been deficient, I don't say in charity merely, but even in justice to your brethren, (shall I have leave to call them) who, concerning the Trinity, think differently from you, and perhaps from the truth; for I know no better rule of justice, than our doing by others, as we would have others, both God and man, do by us.

AND if, when we are conscious to our selves, that we love truth, are concern'd for the glory of God, and hate every sin, known and unknown, we can expect the divine favour for our selves, though we may unwillingly be mistaken, and ignorantly sin, we are hardly just to others, if we hope not the same concerning them.

AND if we would have others favourable to us, when through human infirmity we may err, and not charge our mistakes on prejudice, pride, or corrupt biases, but think we may take up our opinions on what appears evidence to us, after the best examination we can make, 'tis hardly just to think otherwise of others, who may differ from us, especially in points difficult, deep and abstruse. This difference, where persons otherwise appear sincere servants of God, and lovers of truth, can never be a just reason for hating them, that is, for abating our

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Christian love and esteem, much less for renouncing or casting them out of fellowship.

WHETHER these reasons may be convincing to you, I know not. You may possibly still appear blameless to your self; and you must be the best judge for your self, you alone being accountable to the supreme Judge for your own behaviour. As I doubt not your sincere concern for his glory and truth, neither can I doubt your acceptance, thus far, with him; though I have thought your conduct blame-worthy, and have here given you my reasons. My reasons, I say; for others, who may think alike of your conduct, may have other reasons for so doing. I am

REVEREND SIR,

Yours, &c.

APPEN.

A P P E N D I X.

HAVING asserted ^a above, that a person unprejudiced and without prepossession on either side the question, may, on weighing the evidence on both sides, be held in suspense; and several such of equal capacity and integrity, may make different determinations hereupon; give me leave, from what you have suggested, to set this matter in a clearer light. You tell us the first two verses of the Evangelist John, and Chap. I. of the epistle to the Hebrews, are definitive on your side the question.

I shall therefore here lay down the Interpretation given, by those in both schemes, of the first passage, and the arguments from both in their utmost strength. By this it may be seen, whether such unprejudiced persons, may not singly be in suspense, or severally give into different senses, without forfeiting their character for Capacity or Integrity.

AND the unprejudiced persons I would have to judge, were they to be met with, should be either Jews or Heathens convinced of the truth of Christianity in general, but as yet strangers to the Christian doctrines, and the particular sentiments of any set of Christians; of full age and capacity to judge for themselves, but disposed to embrace what, upon impartial enquiry, they apprehend right.

Vide, page, 34. 35.

YOUR

YOUR interpretation of the passage in John is to this purpose.

In the beginning (viz. of time, and all created things) *was the Word* (ὁ λόγος. The second Person of three, viz. the Father, Word, and Spirit, in the one Godhead) *and the Word was with GOD* (πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, viz. the Father, the first of these three) *and the Word was GOD*, καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος (viz. the self same Being with the Father, though another Person coessential and consubstantial :) *This same Person* (viz. the Logos) *was in the beginning with God*, (viz. the Father) *all things were made by him* (viz. as GOD their author and efficient) *and without him* (viz. as coefficient with the Father) *was not any thing, any one thing* (οὐδὲ ἓν) *made that was made.*

YOUR arguments in support of this Interpretation are,

I. First, The Logos or Word, is not only here styled GOD, but expressly asserted to be GOD. And *the Word was GOD*, καὶ Θεός ἦν ὁ λόγος. Can a divine writer under inspiration, assert this of one who is not GOD, very GOD? would not this be to give his name, and thereby his glory to another? which the jealous GOD assures us he will never do. Must he not do this, if one under his inspiration asserts another to be GOD, who is not so?

II. Secondly, He is said to have been in the Beginning, viz. of Time, and all things that had a Beginning, as time had. Now he who already was, when time began, and all things that had a beginning, could himself have no beginning. His Being must have been unbegun. And a Being that was antecedent to all things that had a beginning, and himself without beginning, must have been from everlasting;
and

and what was so must be God; no Being can be eternal, but must be necessary, that is God.

III. Thirdly, It is said, *all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made*, no not one thing, *οὐδὲ ἓν*, which is repeated in other words, ver. 10. *The world was made by him*. Hence you argue,

(1.) First, He was plainly unmade, for that it is expressly said, not one of the things that were made, were made without him. He must therefore either make himself, which is manifestly absurd, or he must be unmade, for all made things were made by him. And he who was before all made things, and himself unmade, and the maker of all, must be God; can be no other than the eternal Being, the almighty Creator. (2.) Making all things is, throughout the Old Testament, the distinctive Character of the living God. It is that by which he distinguishes himself, and is distinguished by his Servants from all false Gods. ^b *Thus saith the Lord, that created the heavens, that formed the earth and made it, I am the Lord, and there is none else.* ^c *Thou art the God, even thou alone, thou hast made heaven and earth.* Now can it be imagined that God, who has so often declared his jealousy in this matter, would ascribe the making the world, and every one thing in it, to another who is not God? If it be indeed the distinctive Character of the living God, that he made all things, then he who made all things (which the Logos is here said expressly to have done, no one thing excepted,) must be this God.

THESE arguments, you think, irrefragably prove the Word to be God, the true God; and this being once admitted, your interpretation of the text is established: It can have no other meaning.

^b Isai. xiv. 18.

^c 2 Kings xix. 15.

THEIR interpretation of the passage is this: *In the Beginning*, (viz. when GOD created the heavens and the earth, Gen. i. 1.) *was the Logos, the Word; and the Word was with God*, (viz. the Creator of heaven and earth) *and the Word was* (not only with GOD, πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, the Creator of heaven and earth, but) GOD, (viz. a divine Person, Θεὸς ἦν, not ὁ Θεός, with whom he was, but Θεός, GOD, or a most god-like Being.) *This same was in the beginning* (viz. of the world and all things therein,) *with God*, τὸν Θεόν, *all things were made by him, and without him was not any one thing made that was* (then) *made*; (GOD, the great Efficient, and proper Maker of the world, performing this great work by him, as his Instrument, by whom he made the world, τῷ αἰῶνα. Secula. Heb. i. 2.)

To confirm this interpretation, they say, it is the most natural, easy, plain meaning of it, both in it self, and in comparison of the former. The Logos is plainly here spoken of as a Person, that is, a Being, or acting subject, distinct from every other; who is afterward said *to become flesh, and tabernacle, or dwell among men, who beheld his glory*. And supposing the Evangelist's design to set him forth as such, and particularly as such a subject of action, or Being, distinct from GOD, but derived from him in some peculiar way, so as to be his only begotten, (as he is afterward call'd) every thing in the passage is proper, and to his purpose. Every expression concerning him has a proper meaning, every new expression gives new light to the subject, and farther information concerning this Person; not a word is waste.

HE was in the Beginning, with a manifest allusion to Gen. i. 1. In the Beginning, when GOD *created the heavens and the earth*, the *Word* was already in Being

Being. He was with GOD: He was GOD, Θεὸς ἔν, not that GOD with whom he was, ἢ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν. Θεὸς ἦν. He was with GOD, even the living GOD, the Maker of all things. He was GOD; not this GOD, with whom he was, but a most excellent and godlike Being, the only begotten of this GOD, and most perfectly resembling him. He not only was in the beginning, not only was with GOD, but was with GOD in the Beginning; in that very period or instant when the world began, and was made. How significant is each expression? How naturally does all prepare a way for the last branch of the description? *And all things are made by him*, viz. as the Instrument of the great Creator; *and without him was not any one thing made in heaven, or earth, that in the beginning was made.* The world knew nothing of such a Being before. All is a new discovery, and every expression opens the subject to farther view. Not a word is lost, and every thing has a plain, proper, and obvious sense.

BUT supposing the Evangelist intended to represent him as GOD, the Creator of all things, here is a deal of ambages and circumlocution to convey this sense; nor doth it speak it very plain, after all. Could he not as plainly have said, as, we are told, he must mean, that in GOD, who made all things, are three personal distinctions, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, the second of which was made flesh.

BUT if this were his real purpose, he does not seem to have chosen the most apt words for it. Why should he tell us, that *he was in the beginning*, viz. of creation, when GOD made heaven and earth? It is no very high thing to be said of one who is GOD, that he was in Being when the world began. Moses does not talk thus of the great Creator; but, taking

taking his eternal and necessary existence for an agreed or indisputable truth, says, that *in the beginning he created the heavens and the earth.*

BUT when it is added, *the Word was with God?* what can this term import? Must not a Jew understand it of God, the Maker of all things? Must not an Heathen understand it of God supreme, D. O. M.? Was it not the Evangelist's intention in writing, to instruct those who did not, as well as those who did, understand the Christian doctrine? Could either Jew or Heathen guess, that, by this passage, he did not mean, that another distinct Being was with God; but only that the second of three personal Characters in the Godhead was with the first? Must not this sense be carried to the text? Could it possibly arise out of it to either a Jew or Heathen? at least, till, by the arguments it affords, they were convinced of the real Godhead of the Logos?

BUT admit this to be the real and obvious meaning to all men; what farther information is given by all that follows? Is there any thing emphatical in it? Why should it be said, *The Word was God?* Is not this implied, and more than implied, in the former sentence, if that indeed imports, that *one* of *two* personal characters in the Godhead was with another.

BUT had this been necessary, why is it again doubled over, *The same was in the beginning with God?* Must not every one know, without such information, that two Persons having inseparable communion in the Godhead, must, not only in the beginning, but from everlasting to everlasting be with each other?

AND why, after all, is it added, that one of these made all things, and that with such minuteness, as

to inform us not one is to be excepted? Could it be doubted, by any who was already informed that the Logos was God, the Maker of all things, or one of two Persons in the Godhead, that he did make every thing, that he must do so?

ALL after the second clause in this view, is utterly superfluous; no new light is conveyed by the rest, but all manifestly implied in that. It is a waste of words to no purpose, with which a divine Writer, they think, is not to be charged.

THE other passage, in the epistle to the Hebrews, being longer, I shall not paraphrase, but content my self with giving the arguments on both sides.

BOTH are agreed, that it is the scope of the Apostle, in the passage, to set forth the dignity of the Person, of whom he speaks, and thereby to shew the excellency of the Christian above the Mosaic Dispensation; which is the main drift of this epistle to the Christian Hebrews, who had been brought up under the latter.

You say it is his purpose, in this passage, to establish his Godhead, or to prove that he is Jehovah, the living God, the God of the Hebrews; and have several arguments to offer from it, in proof of this.

He is represented both as to what he is in himself, and in a way of comparison with angels.

I. As to what he is in himself. And here several things offer in proof of his Deity.

1. HE is represented as the Maker of all things. *By him made God the worlds, τὰς αἰῶνας*, Secula. That this is to be understood of the whole frame of created Being, is plain, from the Apostle's use of the word

word, in the same sense elsewhere, in this Epistle? *By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of GOD,*^d κατεργάσας τὰς αἰῶνας ἡμῶν τὸ ΘΕΟΣ. That the making of these is ascribed to the Son, is plain: this is assigned as a reason why he is constituted Heir of all things, because he made all things. He must therefore have been before all things, and therefore must have been eternal; because, before the creation of things and ages, there was nothing but eternity, and therefore no Being but the eternal Being. And though it is said, GOD made the worlds by him, yet seeing he must, for the reason given, be the eternal Being, it cannot mean that he is another Being from GOD, but only another Person in Godhead. The Father being first, does all things from himself, but by his Son. But it is the same GOD does all, and the Son works by the same energy as the Father; so that GOD may be said to make all things by the Son, as a man to understand by his reason.

2. HE is said to be the brightness of his Father's glory, and express image of his Person; in which, in the first place, he seems to be compared to the solar rays which are generated of the sun's substance, are of the same nature, propagated from it, but never divided and separated; nor was the sun ever without its rays: So that the Son is the effulgence of his Father's glory, as generated by him from eternity, but consubstantial with him, and inseparably united. And how is it possible that any thing not GOD, should be the brightness of his glory? Can any thing, but what is divine, be the effulgence of divine glory? Any thing shine out with the glory of GOD, that is not GOD?

He is stiled the express image of his person, τῆς ὑποστάσεως, with an allusion to an impression by a

^d Chap. xi. 3.

seal; which is not, indeed, the self-same with the seal, by which it is impress'd, but perfectly like it. Now what can be perfectly like God, but God? Yet not another God, because he can be but one, but another Person in Godhead, and therefore term'd the express character of his Person. And what can be the express image of one divine Person, but another?

3. He has the conservation of all things ascribed to him as well as their creation, and that in an emphatical manner; he upholds all things, by the word of his power. This every where in the Old Testament is made the Characteristic of the living God. And can the Apostle give him this Character, if he be not the living God, especially with the manner annex'd; He upholds all things by the word of his power, of his own power; in the same manner in which God made all things; He said, and it was done; he commanded and it was created; he spake and it stood fast? Who but God can, by his powerful word, make and sustain all things?

II. In a way of comparison with Angels. And here he is said to be superior to Angels.

First, In as much as HE is the Son of GOD: to which of the Angels, said he, thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee: And again; I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son. Now it is plain that this title is both given to Adam and Angels, as the creatures of God. Adam, who was the Son of God^e. There was a day when the Sons of God came together^f. It must be therefore of a Sonship, proper and peculiar. He is the author of their Being, and so their Father. But they were made out of nothing: the Son was not made at all, but eternally generated of his Father's substance, by a

^e Luke iii. ult.

^f Job i. 6.

proper filiation indeed, yet not so as to become here-upon a distinct substance, as the son of a man is, but by communication of the same substance; God substantially or essentially being but one. And he is hereupon so peculiarly the Son of God, as none else can be; called therefore ^s the only begotten (by the Evangelist John.) And the Son of God, in this sense, must be as truly God as the Son of man is man; with this diversity, that the Son of man by communication of another substance, but out of his Father's, becomes another man; The Son of God, by communion in the same substance, becomes not another God, but another Person only in Godhead. But being so the Son of God as Angels are not, he must be the proper Son of God, and as such must be God, of the same nature and substance with the Father.

Secondly, THIS is confirmed by his being the Object of their Adoration; so much their superior that they must pay worship to him. *When he brings his first-born into the world, he saith, Let all the Angels of God worship him.* Now this epistle is written to the Hebrews, who by the first Commandment of their Law were forbidden to have any God besides Jehovah. To appropriate all religious worship to him, was certainly fundamental in their Religion, if it be not in all Religion. Must not they then own him for the living God, when by his command, Angels are bound to worship him? Could they ever entertain a thought, that the jealous God, would require worship to be paid by Angels themselves to one who is not God? Especially when they adverted, that in the citation of the Apostle from the Psalmist, Jehovah is certainly the Object of this adoration, and that in contradistinction to false Gods, and Idols.

^s John i. 18. and iii. 16.

Confounded be all they that worship Images, that boast themselves of Idols: Worship him all ye Gods. Could the Apostle, under Inspiration, make such a reference as this, and apply a passage which originally pertains to Jehovah, as contradistinguished to false Gods and Idols, to one who is not God, and set him forth as the Object of an angelical adoration? Surely the Hebrews must have been shocked hereat, to see the very first Commandment of their Law so manifestly trampled under foot, by one pretending the authority of that God, who gave them their Law. The Son therefore must be very God, because Angels are required to worship him, and that as God, if the Apostle cites their Divine writings to the purpose.

Thirdly, HE is here asserted to have an everlasting Dominion over Angels and all things: And in this respect is their Superior. The highest thing said of Angels, is that they are ministers and messengers of God. Of the Angels he saith, *Who maketh his Angels spirits, or winds, and his ministers a flame of fire*, quick, lively, strong in their motions, *But to the Son, thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* So that everlasting Dominion, and that over Angels and all things, is attributed to him, and that as God; and this, moreover, by God himself. Angels are but Ministers, God speaks to them as such; they are but attendants about the Throne, he is in it, and his Throne is for ever and ever: And God himself speaks of him as God, *Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* Now, must it not be evident beyond contradiction, that he is the God and Lord of Angels, whose is the Throne, when they are but ministers and messengers of his Will? Could the living God give him the stile and title of God, and ascribe such Dominion to him, if

^a Psalm xcvi. 7.

^b Πνεύματα.

he were not God? Would not this be giving his glory to another? And language very shocking to Hebrews on this supposition? Must not he be seated in the Throne of God, who, in contradistinction to Angels, has, from God himself, the stile and title of God, and an everlasting Throne? When the highest of them are but Ministers of God, must not He be God, who is in the Throne, and has these in subjection to him? Sure his stile and ascriptions here are divine, and too uncreaturely to be given of God himself, to any Creature, or Being beneath himself.

Fourthly, THIS receives additional strength from what the Apostle immediately subjoins, as a reason of the forenamed everlasting Dominion; he is Lord of all things, for that he is the maker of all things. This effect being ascribed to him by God himself, in a citation from the Psalmist, manifestly addressed to Jehovah, and in very magnificent expressions, setting forth his creating Power, and everlasting and immutable Being. And to him God saith, *Thou, LORD, in the beginning, hast laid the Foundations of the Earth,, and the Heavens are the work of thine hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest, and they shall wax old as doth a garment: As a vesture thou shalt roll them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same,* (οὐ δὲ ὁ αὐτὸς εἶ) *and thine years shall not fail.* This is manifestly to say of him, not only that he *laid the foundations of the Earth, and the Heavens are the work of his hands*, but that he is that unchangeable and eternal Being who did make all things, and shall at last roll up the Heavens, whilst Himself remains for ever Himself, and unchangeably the same. No one can doubt but the words bear this sense as used by the Psalmist, and addressed to Jehovah. And can it be supposed, God himself would use this pomp of ex-

* Psal. cii. 25, 26, 27.

pression,

pression, and apply this magnificent description of his Power and Perfections to an inferior Being? Were not this to confound Characters, and give his Glory to another? Surely, if the distinguishing Ascriptions to Jehovah, be by Jehovah himself given to him, he must be Jehovah too, or else God doth in the most express terms, give his glory to another, which he has declar'd he will never do. And what a disadvantageous idea must it give the Hebrews of him, to find him thus contradicting himself?

V. *Finally*, He is here seated *at the right hand of God, of the Majesty on high*, as it is expressed, *ver. 3. To which of the Angels, said he, Sit thou at my right Hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministring Spirits?* Now, to sit at the right Hand of the Majesty on high, is to be placed in a state of equality with God, it is to attribute equal Power to him; and sure none but God has equal Power with God. He must therefore be God, since he is seated at his right hand; and this concludes the more strongly, in the opposition he is here set in to Angels; they are ministring spirits, *πνεύματα λειτουργικά*; he is seated at God's right hand; so that they minister to him as to God, and therefore surely he must be God as well as his Father, having the ministers of his Father waiting alike on him as their Sovereign. This is the argument on your side the question, which I have endeavoured to set forth in its full strength.

The argument on the other side allows, as yours, that to raise the Hebrews Idea of Christ, he is set before them both as he is in himself, and compared with Angels; but in the introduction, and throughout, he is manifestly another Being from God, and as manifestly an inferior Being.

First, In the introduction he is plainly distinguished from God, the God of the Hebrews; who certainly

was not one Person in Godhead, but God; being plainly declared to be his Son. God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake unto our Fathers by the Prophets, hath, in these last days, spoken to us by his Son. Is he not here plainly distinguished from God, and declared to be his Son? Was it God who spake by the Prophets, or God the Father only? If it were only God the Father, he only must be God, for it is He that says of himself, he is God alone, that he knows no other. But if it be God, and God be Father, Son, and Spirit, the Son here must be the Son of Father, Son, and Spirit; for God, who spake by the Prophets, has spoken to us by his Son.

Secondly, WHEN he sets forth the dignity of this Person in himself, is he not as plainly distinguished from God? Is it not said, *God who spake by the Prophets, and by his Son to us, has appointed him (viz. his Son,) heir of all things, that by him (viz. his Son) He (viz. God, who spake) made the worlds That he (viz. God's Son) is the brightness of his (viz. God's) Glory, and the express Image of his (viz. God's) Substance*¹ (*τὸς ὁμοεικὸς*) not the self same substance; for this would not be the image of God's substance, but the substance itself: The thing and its image must be two things. So are the seal and impression made by it. Likeness cannot be without unlikeness. The self same thing is it self; it must be some other thing that is like it. And the image of one Substance,

¹ So the word is render'd Chap. xi. 8. and should be here. But if it be still read the Image of his Person, this can make no difference. God's Person *a parte rei* is God's Substance. God, who spake to their Fathers by the prophets, is as manifestly here spoken of as one person, and Jesus Christ as another person not in Godhead, but as the express Image of his Person who is the Godhead, even Jehovah the God of Israel, who was not one Person in Godhead, but God himself, the Deity.

however

however like it be supposed, must be another Substance. What is the same Substance must be the same thing. Nor could the Son be the Substance of God without being the very God, from whom he stands here distinguish'd as his Son, and from whose substance he stands distinguish'd as its Image.

And when he is said to be the effulgence of his Glory, should reference be herein had to the Radiance of the Sun, the Ray may be part of the Sun's substance, but is not the Sun's substance, nor inseparable from it; nor the Sun's glory, though it may be in part so, and a manifestation of it. But the effulgence of God's glory certainly is not his essential glory it self, that is himself; and if we should suppose the Son to be as much of the same nature and substance with the Father, as the ray of the Sun is of his; it is manifest, that he is not in this respect the Father's substance, but somewhat issuing from it, and propagated by it; of the same general nature indeed, but not the self same individual substance. But the expressions are plainly figurative; the Son is plainly another Person from God, and another Being, being the son of God; but the most radiant Manifestation of his Glory, and most perfectly resembling him, his Person, viz. the Person of God, not of one in^m God; of this there is none, not the least

^m The Image of such a person in God, as some have devised, the Son cannot be. For the Personal Character of the Father is to be unbegotten, and the Godhead, with this distinguishing property, is his person. The Personal Character of the Son is to be begotten, and the self same Godhead, with this distinguishing Property, is his Person. The Godhead in each is the self same, and cannot be its own image. The Personal properties are so unlike as to be quite contrary. Begotten; unbegotten. And these properties constituting the Person, can the Person constituted such, by being begotten ever be the express image of the Person constituted by being unbegotten? That is, the most unlike and indeed opposite, be a perfect likeness?

hint, throughout the whole, of any such Distinctions in Godhead, or that Jehovah the God of the Hebrews, is more than one Person.

WHEN the Apostle goes on to tell us *he* (viz. the Son) *upholds all things by the word of his* (viz. God's) *power*, the brightness of whose glory, and image of whose substance he is, not his own power; ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτὴς τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ, φέρων τὰ τὰ πάντα τῇ ἐνάγκῃ τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ. αὐτοῦ, manifestly referring to the same antecedent, viz. ὁ Θεός, God who spake, &c. And finally, *after he* (viz. God's Son) *had made purification of our sins by himself, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high*, not on God's throne, but a seat by it, *on his rightⁿ hand*.

DOES not the whole imply his being, not another Person in Godhead, but another Person from God, and inferior to him even in his highest Character. For these ascriptions pertain not to him as man. Does not God appoint him heir of all things? God made the worlds by him, God as the efficient, he as the instrument, not the Father in God, by the Son in God, but God, Jehovah, by his Son. He is not his glory but the effulgence of it. The express character of his Substance or Person, not his very Substance or Person itself. Upholding all things, but by the word of God's power. And seating himself not in God's throne, but at his right hand, and that when God calls him to it. See ver. 13. Doth not all

ⁿ This is made use of, on the other side, as an argument of his equality with God, equality in dominion and power, but sure without any colour of reason. It is the next seat to the royal throne, as the next on the left would be to that, but does by no means imply that it is a seat equal to it. When the Mother of Zebedee's children desired that her two sons, might sit, one on Christ's right hand, and the other on his left in his kingdom, can any imagine she meant, that he would make them equal to himself?

Speak

speaking him a different Person, that is, Being from God, and his inferior?

3. *Thirdly*, WHEN compared with Angels, he is still spoken of as thus distinct and inferior.

HE has indeed a more excellent name than they, which he had by lot, or inheritance, *viz.* the Son; to which of the Angels said he (*viz.* God who spake by the Prophets) thou art my Son? It is owned that he was in a peculiar way begotten of God, or had his Being from him; whence, and for his resemblance of him, he is called his Son, his first-born, his only begotten. But still, 'tis the Son of God. For is it not the self same God that speaks to his Angels and his Son? and if so, must not he be equally the Son of this God, as they his Angels and Ministers? must not the Hebrews think, that he who spake by the Prophets, even Jehovah, their God was equally the Father of this Person, and maker and Lord of Angels; is there any the least hint, that a difference is to be made? or that we must suppose Jehovah indeed to speak to the Angels, but only the Father in the Deity to speak to the Son? could any one find this meaning in the passage, who did not carry it thither?

WHEN the Angels are bid to worship him (a manifest proof of his superiority to them indeed) it is in a way implying still his inferiority to God. Why else should Angels be called on to worship him? can they be supposed ignorant of his communion in Godhead, if that be the case? or knowing it, did they need a warrant or command to worship him? Is not worship naturally and necessarily due to every one known to be God? could Angels be ignorant of this? or could the bringing him into the world, whatever that implies, raise a doubt in them, whether, the worship naturally and unchangeably
due

due to him, were to be suspended or superseded? and must it not be as shocking to the Hebrews, to find Angels called upon to worship One they knew to be Jehovah, as to find their first Commandment in this particular repealed, and the unlimited prohibition in it so far restrained? If he were an inferior Being, a warrant for his worship, even to Angels, would appear very reasonable to them; and Angels having such warrant, would remove all scruple, as to the worship of the same Being, in themselves. But that Angels should need a command to worship one who was Jehovah, must to them seem unaccountable.

WHEN an everlasting Throne is assigned him, 'tis still in a manner, that speaks him inferior to God. For though he is introduced as saying to him, *thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever*, it is immediately added, *God even thy God* (ὁ Θεὸς ὁ Θεὸς σου, with a reduplication of the article,) *hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness, above thy fellows, Partners, μετόχους* (viz. in service, that is, prophets, and angels) or hath given thee a superior office and commission. Tho' he be called God, by God who spake by the prophets, yet is he not plainly a distinct Being from him, and inferior to him, when he is here called his God, and as such gives him his commission? *God, even thy God has anointed thee.*

Finally, In his highest dignity he is but seated *at the right hand of God*, not the Throne of God, but a seat by it, tho' next his own; and he is seated therein by God; and that while God made his enemies his footstool. He is herein plainly superior to Angels, who are only ministring spirits, but he is as plainly another Being from God, and inferior to him.

IN short, the sum of his argument, for the Superiority of the Son to Angels, is, that He is the Son, they

they but Ministers and Messengers; they, by divine command, are to worship or do homage to him; he has a throne, a seat by God's throne, at his right Hand; a sovereign Administration over Angels and all things under God. But he is the Son of that God, whose ministers they are. This God, even Jehovah, ὁ Θεός, is his God as well as theirs. From him he has his authority and commission, throne or seat. By him the Angels are commanded to worship him, and his enemies are made his footstool.

Does this look like any purpose to prove that he is himself Jehovah, or one Person of three in Godhead? doth not the whole make him inferior to God, and another Being?

INDEED had the citation from the Psalmist by it self, been brought in proof of his dignity in himself, or superiority to Angels, it would have looked to the purpose of proving him God. But as now introduced and connected, it cannot be understood to ascribe the creation of the world to him, as to God the first cause. Because he stands throughout distinguished from the God of the Hebrews, the Maker of all things, and, in the very beginning of the passage, is said to have acted in the formation of all things, not as a co-efficient with God, but an Instrument under him. By him, not with him, he made the worlds; so that, though God himself uses the words of the Psalmist address'd to himself, he does not give his glory to another; the whole scope of the passage plainly requiring, that they should not be understood in the same sense, when applied to his Son, as when applied to himself.

AND if the purpose of the Apostle were to set forth the Son as Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews, he does not seem to pursue his purpose in the most proper way. Why should he not roundly assert, that

he was Jehovah, the God who spake by the prophets; at least, one of three personal distinctions in his Godhead, the second, and Son of the first, the Son in the Godhead? Nor is he properly, in this scheme, the Son of God, but the Son of the Father in God, and most properly so term'd, though he is never spoken of as such, in all the New Testament, but ever as the Son of God.

BUT nothing like this is here expressed, nor, indeed, necessarily implied, in any expressions used by the Apostle. Not in his being constituted Heir of all things by God, not in God's making the worlds by him, not in his being stiled the effulgence of God's glory, or express image of his Person, or rather Substance, not in his upholding all things by the Word of God's power. Why all this variety of expression, which neither plainly asserts, nor necessarily implies it, to shew that he was Jehovah, who spake by the Prophets, the second of three Persons in the Godhead? Can any one, on the reading this passage by itself, perceive this to be the divine Writer's obvious, manifest, and necessary meaning?

BUT if this part of the passage, setting forth the dignity of this Person in himself, do plainly and necessarily carry this sense, the rest of this argument seems little better than impertinence, which is by no means to be charged on a divine Writer. What end could the Apostle have, in labouring the proof of his superiority to Angels, after he had opened, asserted, and established his real Divinity, or declared and proved him to be the living God? Could the Hebrews doubt whether he, who was to be proved to be God, had a more excellent name than Angels, that they were to worship him, that he had a sovereign dominion over them and all things? Sure, after the establishing his Divinity, no farther arguments
were

were necessary to evince his superiority to Angels, in name, excellency, or dignity. And, indeed, this had been more clearly made out in what went before, than in any words here used by the Apostle, upon this supposition.

NOR was it at all necessary to prepare the way to what follows; for had all been omitted, that is here said concerning the superiority of Christ to Angels, he might have gone on, and told the Hebrews, *Wherefore we ought to give the more diligent heed;—for if the word spoken by Angels was,—How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? which began to be spoken by the living God himself, the Lord of Angels, and all things.* Does not this appear in as full strength, if all the first chapter, from the fourth verse, were omitted, supposing the real Divinity of Christ established; nay, and in more strength than as now connected, if *ἡ Κύριος*, the LORD, must answer to Jehovah in the Old Testament?

NOR does it happily connect, neither in this sense, with what follows, *which began to be spoken by the living God, and was confirmed to us, by them that heard him, God also bearing witness with signs, &c.* Because God, who is said to bear witness, is plainly distinguished from the Lord, *ἡ Κύριος*, who began to speak the word, and is manifestly a superior Character and Being, as bearing testimony to what he and his Apostles spake, *by signs, wonders, and miracles of the Holy Ghost.*

THIS is the argumentation on both sides, from these passages, which you think definitive on your side. I have endeavoured to set it forth with all impartiality, and in its full strength.

ARE you certain every such unprejudiced Person, as I would chuse for a Judge in this debate, must, upon hearing and considering the argument, think as you do; and that no one, without forfeiting his Character for capacity or integrity, without a *weak head*, or a *wicked and ungodly heart*, can fall in with the other side? You may, for any thing I know, be still of this persuasion. But whether, if you are, it be the effect of prepossession, or the result of evidence, over-bearing evidence, on your side, is another question, which I shall not take upon me to determine; but leave to the common judgment of all men of sober minds.

YOURS, &c.

* * * *The following extracts from two orthodox Divines of the last age, may tend to further the design of the preceding Letter.*

The substantial and *practical* honour of the Trinity is best: Then do we honour the Trinity in Unity, not when we conceive of the mystery, but when we make a religious use of this high advantage, to come to God, in the name of Christ, by the spirit. Direct your prayers to God the Father: Christ prayed to his Father: so the Saints in their addresses.—In the name of Christ.—By the Spirit.—Christians need not puzzle themselves about Three in One, and One in Three; let them, in this manner, come to God
Dr.

and it sufficeth. Make GOD the Object, and Christ the means of access, and look for help from the Spirit.

Dr. MANTON, *Serm.* 32 on Heb. xi. vol. iii.

He who goes about to speak of the mystery of the Trinity, and doth it by words and names of man's invention—talks of essences and existences, hypostases and personalities, priorities and co-equalities, and unities in pluralities, &c. may amuse himself, and build a tabernacle in his head, and may talk of something, but he knows not what. But the man who feels the power of the Father, to whom the Son is become *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*, and in whose heart the *love of the Spirit* of GOD is *shed abroad*, though he knows nothing of what is unintelligible, yet he alone understands the Doctrine of the TRINITY.

Dr. JER. TAYLOR, on John vii. 17.

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Dr. J. J. Taylor, on John vii. 17.



